

Interim President's Report

Annual General Meeting

PURPOSE:

PREPARED BY:

Approval Discussion Information

Dr. Donna M. Rogers, Interim President and Vice-Chancellor
Ilham Punjani, CBTSS

Introduction

As I near the end of my tenure as Interim President and Vice-Chancellor of Algoma University, I've taken time to reflect on the significant progress we've made together over the past several months—and the vital role played by Algoma's dedicated Board of Governors.

Though four months is a relatively short period, we have achieved meaningful milestones to safeguard the long-term future of the University, particularly the difficult but necessary decision to pause admissions to five low-enrolment programs demonstrates a shared commitment to financial sustainability and positions the University to respond effectively to key recommendations from the Auditor General's report.

As the University prepares to welcome a new Interim President and Vice-Chancellor, I am confident the Board will continue to lead with unity and purpose—consistently prioritizing the long-term sustainability and success of Algoma University in every decision it makes.

I am pleased to present the Board with a progress update on eight key presidential priorities initiated by Dr. Asima Vezina for 2024-25, and advanced further during my brief tenure as Interim President and Vice-Chancellor. These include significant developments in the following areas: Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan, Professional and Continuing Education (PACE), Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research Institute (OMHARTI), Makwa Waakaa'igan, Risk Management Framework, implementation of the Auditor General's Recommendations, Organizational Structure, and the Student Information Management System (SIS).

Finally, I sincerely thank the Governors for your support during this time of transition and challenge. I believe deeply in Algoma University, its people, and the critical role it plays in each of our three campus communities, providing access to postsecondary education and limitless opportunities for our students' future. I know that this University will continue to thrive long into the future, in no small part thanks to your commitment to strong and prudent governance. Chi-miigwech.

Strategic Enrolment Management Plan (SEM)

Algoma University's Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan outlines our commitment to diversifying the student body, enriching the academic experience, and advancing innovative programs that respond to the evolving needs of learners and society.

The Plan focuses on expanding access, supporting student success, and equipping graduates to thrive in a complex, interconnected world. I'm pleased to report that the strategy has been finalized, with six key SEM goals now identified to guide our efforts moving forward.

Goal 1: Enhance Student Recruitment and Retention

Goal 2: Expand Global and Local Partnership

Goal 3: Promote Diversity and Accessibility

Goal 4: Align Programs with Market Trends and Labor Market Demands

Goal 5: Foster Alignment of Resources with Enrolment Growth to Support Long-Term Financial Sustainability and Institutional Success

Goal 6: Drive Academic Innovation and Lead through Immersive Technologies

I'm also pleased to report that implementation of the SEM Plan is now underway. Sub-committees have been established for each of the six strategic goals, tasked with developing specific, actionable plans and clearly defined responsibilities—well ahead of the June 2025 target outlined in the Plan. The sub-committees are led by:

- Dr. István Imre, Vice-President Academic and Research
- Lorretta Neebar, University Registrar and Executive Director, Student Services
- Brent Krmptich, Associate Vice-President, International Affairs and Recruitment
- Martin Bayer, Vice-President Nyaagaaniid, Anishinaabe Initiatives, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Faculty members and Deans from across the university are actively engaged in this important work through their participation in the sub-committees.

The sub-committees will begin developing a detailed three-year implementation and monitoring framework, with quarterly milestones by end of June 2025 and we begin implementation of the enrolment strategy from June 2025 to May 2028.

Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)

PACE continues to move full steam ahead on a multi-year strategic initiative aimed at developing high-quality online programs for domestic and international learners, reinforcing our commitment to accessible and industry-relevant education. I am pleased to report that five new PACE postgraduate certificate programs will launch in Fall 2025:

1. Information Technology & Infrastructure (1 year)
2. Information Technology & Infrastructure (2 years)
 - a. Cloud and Systems Engineering (CSE) Specialization
 - b. Network Infrastructure and Cybersecurity (NIC) Specialization
3. Supply Chain Operations & Analytics (1 year)
4. Advanced Supply Chain , Strategy & Innovation (2 years)

PACE also plans to introduce stackable micro-credentials in high-demand areas, with potential short-form programs in Business Leadership and Artificial Intelligence Ethics, beginning in 2025–26.

The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research Institute (OMHARTI)

Significant groundwork has been laid for the launch of the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute (OMHARTI), positioning the initiative for a strong and strategic takeoff in the near future. Foundational planning, engagement, and early-stage development have created a solid platform from which the project can now advance.

By July 2025, OMHARTI will be formally designated as a separate non-profit research institute, with a defined governance structure, mandate, and long-term vision. The institute will support collaborative research with academic units at Algoma University and NOSM, as well as community programming. It will also build future capacity for fundraising and revenue generation, beginning in 2026–27. At the same time, institutional planning is advancing to support interdisciplinary academic offerings and research priorities—laying the groundwork for program launches focused on mental health and addictions management, research chair development, and grant applications in the following year. I am especially grateful to a team of dedicated faculty colleagues in Psychology who have taken the lead in creating relevant community-engaged academic programming that will support OMHARTI.

Makwa Waakaa'igan

As the Board is aware, Maple Reinders began mobilizing on site during the week of March 17. A demolition permit was issued in early April, and the East Wing was subsequently disconnected from Shingwauk Hall. By the end of April, 90% of the demolition was complete, with only the concrete slab remaining.

Site infrastructure work has continued through May, with excavation for the new footings scheduled to begin later this month. I'm also pleased to share that the Makwa Waakaa'igan working group is planning an earth-turning event this summer, with preparations already underway.

Risk Management Framework

As of May 2025, we've implemented a robust new risk management framework to support more informed and responsive decision-making across the university. This includes the development of Key Risk Indicators (KRIs), finalized with input from stakeholders across all functions.

From June, we aim to provide the Board with a risk dashboard, which is currently in production by the IT team and the BTO; this decentralized approach of data collation and a centralized dashboard is aiming to ensure data accuracy and integration across all portfolios for institution wide reporting.

The final phase will focus on embedding the framework into daily operations through targeted training and engagement from all portfolios, as we are still in the early awareness stages for risk based thinking. In the meantime, progress and emerging risks will continue to be reported to the Board's Risk and Finance Committee.

Auditor General's Recommendations

Implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations is progressing. In response to Recommendation 8 of the 2022 report—and as part of the University's financial review of academic programs and commitment to sustainable academic offerings—the Board approved a one-year pause in admissions for five low-enrolment programs (History, Sociology, Music, Geography, and Visual Arts) on April 28. This is an incredibly important milestone, and I would like to sincerely thank the Board for its leadership on this key recommendation.

I'm also pleased to report that work is underway on Recommendation 15 through the BTO; the recommendation focuses on developing a framework for academic partnerships to ensure that all serve the best interests of students and researchers and enhance the University's reputation.

Organizational Structure

I would like to inform the Board that while Algoma University's current organizational structure remains in place for now, significant planning and preliminary work are underway to support the achievement of the \$15.8 million savings and benefits target outlined in the 2025–26 budget. This includes ongoing analysis and scenario planning to ensure a thoughtful and strategic approach to future changes. I personally, and others in my office, are working with the CHRO to plan and deploy these targeted efficiencies in light of our reduced student enrolment, aligned to the 2025-26 budget.

Student Information System (SIS)

For the information of the Board, Phase 2 planning for the new Student Information System (SIS) is underway, with a focus on resolving outstanding issues and implementing enhancements through bi-monthly agile sprints. Future phases are being reprioritized to accelerate the rollout of critical Financial and Expense Management systems.

Phase 1 is nearing completion, with only the finance modules remaining, which are scheduled for completion by the end of June. In the interim, stop-gap measures have been implemented to ensure continuity during the final stages of Phase 1 deployment.